

NHTSA believes that granting the petitioner's exemption request is consistent with the public interest. The exemption will enable the applicant to sell buses whose overall level of safety is at least equal to that of non-exempted vehicles. Further, we acknowledge that the petitioner is a small business as defined in 13 CFR 121.201³³ Thus, this temporary exemption not only permits the manufacturer to sell vehicles whose overall level of safety is at least equal to that of non-exempted vehicles, but also provides relief to a small business.

A grant is consistent with the Safety Act. The requested exemption will not impact motor vehicle safety because the exempted buses will provide overall safety at least equal to that of nonexempted buses. Further, the petitioner produces a small number of affected vehicles annually. The petitioner stated that it expects to produce no more than 14 affected vehicles during the exemption period. Thus, NHTSA concludes that the petitioner will manufacture very few vehicles relative to the 2,500 per manufacturer limit set forth in the Safety Act and 49 CFR 555.6(d)(4).

Further, as explained below, in accordance with 49 CFR 555.9 and § 30113(h) of the Safety Act, prospective purchasers will also be notified of the exemption prior to making their purchasing decisions. The vehicles must have a label notifying prospective purchasers that the vehicles are exempted from the shoulder belt requirement of FMVSS No. 208 for the side-facing seats.

V. Labeling

Under 49 CFR 555.9(b), a manufacturer of an exempted vehicle must securely affix to the windshield or side window of each exempted vehicle a label containing a statement that the vehicle meets all applicable FMVSS in effect on the date of manufacture "except for Standard Nos. [Listing the standards by number and title for which an exemption has been granted] exempted pursuant to NHTSA Exemption No. ___." This label notifies prospective purchasers about the exemption and its subject. Under § 555.9(c)(2), this information must also be included on the vehicle's certification label.³⁴

³³ According to 13 CFR 121.201, the Small Business Administration's size standards regulations used to define small business concerns, manufacturers of these buses fall under North American Industry Classification System (NAICS) No. 336213, Motor Home Manufacturing, which has a size standard of 1,250 employees or fewer.

³⁴ 49 CFR 555.9(c)(2) refers to § 567.5(c)(7)(iii) as the regulation setting forth the certification

The text of § 555.9 does not expressly indicate how the required statement on the two labels should read in situations in which an exemption covers part, but not all, of an FMVSS. In this case, NHTSA believes that a blanket statement that the vehicle has been exempted from Standard No. 208, without an indication that the exemption is limited to the shoulder belt on side-facing seats, could be confusing. A purchaser might incorrectly believe that the vehicle has been exempted from all requirements of FMVSS No. 208. For this reason, NHTSA believes the two labels should state that the vehicle meets all applicable FMVSS "except for the shoulder belt requirement for side-facing seats (Standard No. 208, Occupant Crash Protection), exempted pursuant to NHTSA Exemption No. 23–02."

In accordance with 49 U.S.C. 30113(b)(3)(B)(iv), the petitioner is granted NHTSA Temporary Exemption No. EX 23–02 from the shoulder belt requirement of 49 CFR 571.208 for side-facing seats on their motorcoaches. The exemption shall remain effective for the period designated at the beginning of this document in the **DATES** section.

Authority: 49 U.S.C. 30113; delegation of authority at 49 CFR 1.95.

Ann Carlson,

Acting Administrator.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Solicitation of Nominations for Appointment to the Advisory Committee on Former Prisoners of War

ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is seeking nominations of qualified candidates to be considered for appointment to the Advisory Committee (Committee) on Former Prisoners of War (FPOW).

DATES: Nominations for membership on the Committee must be received *no later than 5 p.m. EST on December 15, 2023.*

ADDRESSES: All nominations should be mailed to Outreach, Transition and

statement final-stage manufacturers are to use in their certification labels. That reference to § 567.5(c)(7)(iii) is outdated; it should be to § 567.5(d)(2)(v)(A). The certification label requirements for final-stage manufacturers formerly were in § 567(c)(7)(iii) but the requirements were moved to § 567.5(d)(2)(v)(A) (see, 70 FR 7433; February 14, 2005).

Economic Development (OTED), Veterans Benefits Administration (VBA), Department of Veterans Affairs, 1800 G St. NW, Washington, DC 20006 or emailed to *julian.wright2@va.gov*.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT:

Julian Wright, Designated Federal Officer (DFO), OTED, Department of Veterans Affairs, 1800 G St. NW, Washington, DC 20006, telephone (202) 302–8629.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:

In carrying out the duties set forth, the activities of the Committee include, but are not limited to:

(1) Advising the Secretary on how VA can assist and represent FPOWs', including recommendations regarding expanding services and benefits to FPOWs' and related policy. Administrative, legislative and/or regulatory actions;

(2) Advising the Secretary on incorporating lessons learned from current, and previous, successful family research and outreach efforts that measure the impact of provided care and benefits services on FPOWs;

(3) Advising the Secretary on collaborating with family support programs within VA and engaging with other VA and non-VA advisory committees focused on specific demographics of FPOWs;

(4) Advising the Secretary on working with interagency, intergovernmental, private/non-profit, community, and Veteran service organizations to identify and address gaps in services for FPOWs;

(5) Providing such reports as the Committee deems necessary, but not less than one report per year, to the Secretary, through the DFO/VBA to describe the Committee's activities, deliberations, and findings, which may include but are not limited to: (1) identification of current challenges and recommendations for remediation related to access to care and benefits services of FPOWs; and (2) identification of current best practices in care and benefits delivery to FPOWs, and the impact of such best practices.

Authority: The Committee is authorized by statute and operates under the provisions of the Federal Advisory Committee Act (FACA). The Committee advises the Secretary on the following:

(1) The administration of benefits for Veterans who are FPOW, in the areas of service-connected compensation, dependency and indemnity compensation, health care, and rehabilitation.

(2) The use of VA care and benefits services by FPOWs, and possible adjustments to such care and benefits services.

(3) Factors that influence access to, quality of, and accountability for services and benefits for FPOWs.

Membership Criteria and Qualifications:

VA is seeking nominations for Committee membership. The Committee is composed of up to 12 members and several ex-officio members.

The members of the Committee are appointed by the Secretary of Veteran Affairs from the general public, from various sectors and organizations, including but not limited to:

- (1) Veterans who are FPOWs;
- (2) Appropriate representatives of Veterans who are former prisoners of war;
- (3) Individuals who are recognized authorities in fields of pertinent to disabilities prevalent among former prisoners of war, including authorities in epidemiology, mental health, nutrition, geriatrics and internal medicine; and

- (4) Appropriate representatives of disabled Veterans.

In accordance with the Committee Charter, the Secretary shall determine the number, terms of service, and pay and allowances of Committee members. The term of service for any member may not exceed three years. The Secretary may reappoint any Committee member for additional terms of service.

To the extent possible, the Secretary seeks members who have diverse professional and personal qualifications including but not limited to subject matter experts in the areas described above. We ask that nominations include any relevant experience information so that VA can ensure diverse Committee membership.

Requirements for Nomination

Submission: Nominations should be typed (one nomination per nominator). Nomination package should include:

- (1) A letter of nomination that clearly states the name and affiliation of the nominee, the basis for the nomination (*i.e.* specific attributes which qualify the nominee for service in this capacity), and a statement from the nominee indicating the willingness to serve as a member of the Committee;
- (2) The nominee's contact information, including name, mailing address, telephone numbers and email address;
- (3) The nominee's resume or curriculum vitae; and
- (4) A summary of the nominee's experience and qualifications relative to the membership considerations described above.

Individuals selected for appointment to the Committee shall be invited to serve a two-year term. Committee

members will receive a stipend for attending Committee meetings, including per diem and reimbursement for eligible travel expenses incurred.

The Department makes every effort to ensure that the membership of VA Federal advisory committees are diverse in terms of points of view represented and the committee's capabilities. Appointments to this Committee shall be made without discrimination because of a person's race, color, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender identify, national origin, age, disability or genetic information. Nominations must state that the nominee is willing to serve as a member of the Committee and appears to have no conflict of interest that would preclude membership. An ethics review is conducted for each selected nominee.

Dated: November 8, 2023.

Jelessa M. Burney,
Federal Advisory Committee Management Officer.

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DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

Loan Guaranty: Assistance to Eligible Individuals in Acquiring Specially Adapted Housing; Cost-of-Construction Index

AGENCY: Department of Veterans Affairs.
ACTION: Notice.

SUMMARY: The Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) announces that the aggregate amounts of assistance available under the Specially Adapted Housing (SAH) grant program have increased by 6.39% for fiscal year (FY) 2024.

DATES: The increases in the aggregate amounts outlined in this notice were effective as of October 1, 2023.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Terry Rouch, Assistant Director for Loan Policy and Valuation, Loan Guaranty Service, Veterans Benefits Administration, Department of Veterans Affairs, 810 Vermont Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20420, 202-632-8862 (This is not a toll-free number).

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: In accordance with 38 U.S.C. 2102(e), 38 U.S.C. 2102A(b)(2), 38 U.S.C. 2102B(b)(2), and 38 CFR 36.4411, the Secretary of Veterans Affairs announces for FY 2024 the aggregate amounts of assistance available to Veterans and Service members eligible for SAH program grants.

Section 2102(e)(2) authorizes the Secretary to increase the aggregate

amounts of SAH assistance annually based on a residential home cost-of-construction index. The Secretary uses the Turner Building Cost Index for this purpose. See 38 CFR 36.4411(a). Such increase will be equal to the percentage by which the Turner Building Cost Index for the most recent calendar year exceeds that of the next preceding calendar year. If, however, the Turner Building Cost Index for the most recent full calendar year is equal to or less than the next preceding calendar year, the percentage increase will be zero. See 38 CFR 36.4411(b).

In the most recent quarter for which the Turner Building Cost Index is available, second quarter 2023, the index showed an increase of 6.39% over the index value listed for second quarter 2022. Turner Construction Company, <https://www.turnerconstruction.com/cost-index> (last visited August 1, 2023). Pursuant to 38 CFR 36.4411(a), therefore, the aggregate amounts of assistance for SAH grants made pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 2101(a) and 2101(b) have increased by 6.39% for FY 2024. VA measures the calendar year from the end of the second quarter of the preceding year to the end of the second quarter of the current year for the purpose of adjusting SAH grant amounts. This calendar year period provides more up-to-date cost of construction information for a possible adjustment effective October 1 when compared to a January-through-December period, which would result in a 10-month delay in implementation.

Sections 2102A(b)(2) and 2102B(b)(2) require the Secretary to apply the same percentage calculated pursuant to section 2102(e) to grants authorized pursuant to sections 2102A and 2102B. As such, the maximum amount of assistance available under these grants has also increased by 6.39% for FY 2024.

The increases were effective as of October 1, 2023 (38 U.S.C. 2102(e), 38 U.S.C. 2102A(b)(2) and 38 U.S.C. 2102B(b)(2)).

SAH: Aggregate Amounts of Assistance Available During Fiscal Year 2024

Section 2101(a) Grants and Temporary Residence Adaptation (TRA) Grants

Effective October 1, 2023, the aggregate amount of assistance available for SAH grants made pursuant to 38 U.S.C. 2101(a) is \$117,014 during FY 2024. The maximum TRA grant made to an individual who satisfies the eligibility criteria under 38 U.S.C. 2101(a) and 2102A is \$47,130 during FY 2024.